



NEWS RELEASE

USDA FOREST SERVICE • Pacific Southwest Region • 1323 Club Drive
Vallejo, CA 94592 • Voice (707) 562-9004 • Web: <http://www.fs.fed.us>

Contact: Press Office, 707-562-9004

Inyo National Forest: 760-873-2427

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2008 Breathes New Life into Program for *Schools, Roads and Stewardship Projects*

VALLEJO, CA Oct. 23, 2008—More than \$500 million for FY 2008 will be available to 41 states and Puerto Rico for improvements to public schools, road maintenance and stewardship projects under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS Act).

For initial Forest Service implementation of payments to states under the new law, critical deadlines must be met by states and counties to ensure timely 2008 payments. Each state must submit the following information to the Forest Service by November 14, 2008: (1) each county's election to receive a share of the state payment under SRS, or a share of the state's 25-percent payment; and (2) for each county that elects to receive a share of the state SRS payment, the county's allocations for projects. Counties in states that receive transition payments must also make these elections and allocations.

State payments for fiscal year 2008 will be issued no later than January 15, 2009.

Commenting on the SRS reauthorization and the FS implementation plan, U.S. Forest Service Chief Gail Kimbell said, "The reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools Act represents renewed and, in many cases, new opportunities, for counties, Resource Advisory Committees, and National Forests to work together to maintain infrastructure, improve the health of watersheds and ecosystems, protect communities, and strengthen local economies. We look forward to collaborating with communities to fully implement the Act."

Randy Moore, Pacific Southwest Regional Forester added "We are excited to continue our partnerships with California counties and local communities through the Secure Rural Schools Program. In the past seven years, this program has allowed us to make additional investments of \$55 million in projects (1000 projects) that enhance forest ecosystems throughout California."

Since 1908, 25 percent of Forest Service revenues, such as those from timber sales, mineral resources and grazing fees, have been returned to states in which national forest lands are located. The original SRS Act (P.L. 106-393) was enacted to provide assistance to rural counties affected by the decline in revenue from timber harvests in federal lands. The funds have been used for schools and roads as well as to create employment opportunities, to maintain current infrastructure, and to improve the health of watersheds and ecosystems.

P.L. 110-343, enacted on October 3, 2008, reauthorized and amended the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-393). Please see the SRS Act Web site for more information on the new law as it will be implemented by the Forest Service: <http://www.fs.fed.us/srs/>

The Forest Service manages approximately 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands. For more information, visit: www.fs.fed.us.

#